

**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING OF DECEMBER 14, 2010**

AGENDA ITEM VIII-C

Agenda Item: Long Range Transportation Plan Next Steps

Presenter: Beth Alden, MPO Staff

Summary: While the recent sales tax referendum to fund Hillsborough County transportation projects did not pass, recent local polls suggest continued sentiment that transportation is an important issue for local government to address. The majority who voted against the measure cited the current economy as a major reason for their vote. Others cited questions about the Plan related to cost, available details, and fairness of coverage.

This is not an unusual situation for a local government to be in; many communities that ultimately approved sales tax measures to fund transportation had earlier initiatives which were not approved. To better understand what the majority of residents in different areas of our county perceive as critical transportation issues, and what strategies they are prepared to support, MPO staff proposes to revisit the Cost-Affordable Long Range Transportation Plan by conducting focus groups with randomly selected registered voters. This research would be accompanied by research into cost reduction and alternative funding strategies, and overseen by an interagency working group. The project would be funded using the MPO's federal grants for transportation planning, reallocating dollars which had been set aside to assist HART with the next steps in the rail station area planning process.

MPO staff will provide an overview of public opinion research conducted to date by others, and proposed next steps for the MPO.

Recommended Per Board discussion

Action:

Attachment: Various attachments relating to the recent sales tax referendum



November 9, 2010

Mayor Joe Affronti, Sr.
City of Temple Terrace
MPO Chairman

Commissioner Rose Ferlita
Hillsborough County
MPO Vice Chairman

The Honorable John Mica
United States Congress
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Mica:

RE: Florida High Speed Rail

The Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is deeply concerned that you intend to consider scaling back the Florida High Speed Rail project between Tampa and Orlando. We would ask you to reconsider your position for the following reasons:

- Suggesting that the project only serve the Orlando International Airport and theme parks/tourist destinations in your area would result in a "non" high speed train and certainly would be better served locally by Sun Rail.
- Although the northeastern United States has high population density, the fact is they are already served by an extensive commuter rail system.
- The Tampa and Orlando metropolitan areas will continue to grow in population and employment. The high speed rail is the conduit for the "super region" which leaders from both metropolitan areas are trying to promote. A Tampa/Orlando super region is necessary for the I-4 Corridor to compete on a global basis.
- The failure of the referendum does not signal that our citizens are against light rail, but as we experienced in Temple Terrace, there were various reasons for the "no" vote. We must determine all reasons why it failed, analyze them and modify our approach as necessary. To present a program that our citizens approve, we need high speed rail, light rail and mass transit in order to compete with

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Hillsborough County

Councilman Joseph Caetano
City of Tampa

Councilman John Dingfelder
HART

Commissioner Ken Hagan
Hillsborough County

Mayor Rick A. Lott
City of Plant City

Councilwoman Linda Saul-Sena
City of Tampa

Councilman Tom Scott
City of Tampa

Commissioner Mark Sharpe
Hillsborough County

Joseph Waggoner
Expressway Authority

Richard Wainio
Tampa Port Authority

John Wheat
Hillsborough Co. Aviation Authority

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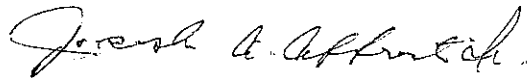
other areas and offer our citizens the best quality of life now and in the future. We cannot give up this effort because it is the right thing to do and it is up to our elected officials to find and present the proper program to make it a reality. As the Mayor of Temple Terrace, I experienced a failed referendum for the largest redevelopment project in the City's history. We regrouped, made changes to the project and today our \$160 million redevelopment project is underway.

- Finally, the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization is the agency responsible for creating the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and fully intends to review that plan over the next year to consider changes that might be made to better meet the needs of our citizens on a countywide basis. Studying voting patterns, issues with voters regarding the recent referendum, and citizen outreach will be an important component of our efforts.

We feel that Florida wants the choice to travel by rail and not just by the automobile or air. We do not believe the money should be reallocated to the northeastern United States bolstering Florida's position as a donor state for taxes going to transit projects.

In summary, the Hillsborough County MPO strongly urges that you reconsider possible action on scaling back or eliminating the Florida High Speed Rail Project.

Sincerely,



Mayor Joseph Affronti, Sr.
Chairman

JArck

cc: MPO Board Members
Mayor Pam Iorio, City of Tampa
Board of County Commission
Tampa City Council
Temple Terrace City Council

Plant City Commission
David Armijo, CEO, HART
Robert Clifford, Executive Director, TBARTA
Robert B. Hunter, Executive Director, The Planning Commission

Summary of Sales Tax Referenda Case Studies

Denver

1997 Referendum on 0.4% sales tax increase – NOT PASSED

- “Plan too vague”/don’t know the costs because of constant changing
- “Too expensive”/big comprehensive proposal of four light rail lines
 - o Needed \$8-\$16 billion in local funds
- “Don’t trust the board”/too many divisions amongst politicians with Democrats supporting and Republicans opposing

1999 Referendum on \$457 million bond for transit – PASSED

- One 5.5-mile light rail line along the southeast corridor (TREX), instead of four
- No increase in taxes
- Tremendous reduction in local funds needed
- Focus on most congested corridor in the district
- Strong political support and editorial support, with proponents raising approximately \$1 million

2004 Referendum on 0.4% sales tax increase – PASSED

- Extending the light rail to more corridors
- Provided clear corridor descriptions with maps
- Held hundreds of public meetings in each of the corridors
- Avoided the highway vs. transit debate
- “A dime on a \$10 purchase”

Phoenix

Phoenix voters did not approve referenda in 1989, in 1994, and by a close margin in 1997.

1997 Referendum on 0.5% sales tax increase – NOT PASSED

- No sunset date
- Implicitly mentioned light rail; focused on bus expansion (local/express) to 400 vehicles
- Little support by politicians and a weak campaign by proponents raising only \$700,000
- Construction date wasn’t set to begin until 2007
- Note that voters in the City of Tempe approved the sales tax dedicated for transit

2000 Referendum on 0.4% sales tax increase – PASSED

- 20 year sunset date
- Adding 100 vehicles to the bus system instead of 400 in the first five years
- Explicitly focused on light rail by proposing approximately 24 miles on its first line with 33% of the funding allocated towards light rail.
 - o Proposed a three phase plan for the first light rail line, with the first phase being 12 miles and completed in 2006; the second phase, 5 more miles, to be completed in 2010; the third phase, 7-10 more miles, more tentatively to be completed in 2016.
- Proponents raised \$1.3 million

Recently:

- Phoenix’s first light rail line opened in December of 2008 consisting of a 20 mile long route
- Proposition 400 was passed in 2004 to extend a 0.5% sales tax for an additional 20 years

Seattle

2007 Referendum on combo of sales and motor-vehicle tax increases – NOT PASSED

- Post-election survey: package too big, too costly, too complex.
 - o “Roads & Transit” package created after 2006 Legislature pre-empts Sound Transit Long Range Plan from ballot, weds regional freeways & regional transit in “shotgun marriage”
- Off-year election meant older, anti-tax voters; top of ballot meant high visibility
- Campaign spent \$5 million, but never identified its base
- Message was mixed: “balanced, comprehensive”
- Sierra Club / Cascade Bicycle Club opposition

2008 Referendum on 0.5% sales tax increase for transit alone – PASSED

- Many obstacles identified:
 - o Fall-out from ‘07 ballot: obituaries written in early ‘08
 - o Business supporters bruised and tired
 - o Break-up of Roads & Transit coalition
 - o Bad economic indicators rolling in on cable news
 - o Opponents emboldened
 - o Smaller Sound Transit 2 plan would mean less regional coverage
 - o Continued concern about priorities: crumbling roads, bridges
 - o Legislative opposition to transit-only package
 - o Remaining skepticism within Green coalition
- Reasons cited for success:
 - o Public comments supported going in ‘08 (“let’s do *something*”)
 - o Sierra Club leads charge, after Greenhouse Gas benefit study by Sound Transit
 - o Base energized
 - o Emergence of transit bloggers
 - o Gas prices \$4+/gallon
 - o Smaller price tag:
 - o \$18 billion / 15 year plan
 - o Ongoing traffic congestion
 - o Existing services nearing capacity

Hillsborough’s Community Investment Tax

1995 Referenda on 0.5% sales tax increases – NOT PASSED

- Two separate referenda for public safety and schools
- Exit polling: “mistrust in government stemming from the state's experience with the lottery”
- Sparsely attended election

1996 Referendum on 0.5% sales tax increase – PASSED

- Initial support by sports fans, schoolchild parents
- In July 1996: “Almost 100% recognition, but... a lot of misinformation”
- Quick focus on specific projects (11 schools, for ex.)
- TV spot simply listed what the money would be spent on (scrolling list)
- Referendum language required annual reports on use of funds
- 30-year tax not considered temporary, based on exit polling

	STATE	CITY	QUICK FACTS	SUBJECT	STATUS	OUTCOME
2010 REFERENDA OUTCOMES: SALES TAX LEVIES						
36	MO	St. Louis	Type: Sales tax	St. Louis County Council has voted to place a half-cent sales tax on the ballot in April to provide more funding for Metro, the area's public transportation agency. It requires a simple majority vote for passage. The proposal is the second in recent years to provide more local funding for Metro. A similar half-cent sales tax voters didn't pass in November 2008.	6-Apr-10	WIN Approved 63%-37%
42	SC	Richland County	Type: Sales tax	Voters will be asked to approve a 1 cent transportation sales tax. Of the total revenue raised, 33% would go to fund the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority, 61% would be for road improvements and 6% would go to bike/ped/greenspace projects. The tax would sunset in 25 years.	2-Nov-10	LOSS Failed 49%-51%
10	FL	Hillsborough County	Type: Sales tax	Voters will consider a 1-cent sales tax for transportation. 75% of the revenue would go to public transportation and 25% would go roads and other transportation projects. http://www.movinghillsboroughforward.org/	2-Nov-10	LOSS Failed 42%-58%
11	FL	Polk County	Type: Sales tax	Polk County commissioners have placed a referendum to consider a half-cent sales tax to support the Polk County Transit Authority on the November ballot. If the referendum passes, Citrus Connection, Polk County Transit Services and the Winter Haven Area Transit (WHAT) will be combined and operated by the Polk Transit Authority.	2-Nov-10	LOSS Failed 38%-62%
46	WA	Bellingham	Type: Sales tax	A sales tax increase has been placed on the April ballot for the Whatcom Transportation Authority. Under state law, the transit authority can ask voters for up to an additional three-tenths of 1 percent of local sales tax. The agency, which is running deficits and facing big service cuts and layoffs as sales tax revenues falter, currently collects six-tenths of 1 percent. Roughly 90 percent of WTA's income is from the tax, with fares providing most of the rest. http://www.preserveourpublictransit.org/	27-Apr-10	LOSS Failed 49.1%-50.9%
47	WA	Bellingham	Type: Sales tax	Voters will be asked in November to raise the sales tax by 0.2 percent for transportation projects. The City Council has voted to create a citywide transportation benefit district. Then, acting as the district board, the council will consider asking voters for the sales tax increase that would be in effect for 10 years. The City Council still needs to vote one last time to create the district. It'll consider doing that on July 12. http://www.cob.org/issues/transportation-district-ballot.aspx	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 55%-45%
48	WA	Olympia	Type: Sales tax	Intercity Transit is considering asking voters on the August primary ballot for a sales tax increase of two-tenths of a cent on every dollar. The current transit sales tax is six-tenths of a cent. The deadline to place the measure on the ballot is May 25, but Intercity Transit's governing board is expected to decide whether to go to the ballot on May 5. In 2002, voters approved increasing the sales tax to 0.6 percent from 0.3 percent. Intercity Transit used the money to restore some services cut in the wake of the passage of Initiative 695, which replaced the motor vehicle excise tax with \$30 car tab fees.	17-Aug-10	WIN Approved 63%-37%

49	WA	Walla Walla	Type: Sales tax	Due to a motor vehicle tax repeal in 1999 and reduced tax revenue as a result of the recession, the Valley Transit System have been considering cuts in service. Some citizens have proposed a tax increase to avoid long-term service cuts. The increase, from 0.3 percent to 0 .6 percent, will be put before voters on the February ballot. http://www.transitcampaign.org/	9-Feb-10	WIN Approved 76%-24%
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TOTAL APPROVED 4
TOTAL NOT APPROVED 4
APPROVAL RATE 50%

STATE	CITY	QUICK FACTS	SUBJECT	STATUS	OUTCOME	
2010 REFERENDA OUTCOMES: NEW PROPERTY TAX LEVIES						
14	LA	East Baton Rouge Parish	Type: Property Tax	The Capital Area Transit System board is seeking voter approval for a 3.5-mil property tax that would generate \$10.8 million a year to support the bus system. It does not have a dedicated property tax millage or other revenue stream and has been struggling financially. If approved, it would nearly double the current \$12.5 million budget of the Capital Area Transit System	2-Oct-10	LOSS Failed 47%-53%
16	MI	Bennington Township	Type: Property tax	Voters are being asked to approve a 0.15-mil levy, which will run for four years, for the purpose of providing public transportation within Bennington Township from SATA at a reduced cost. If approved, the millage would raise an estimated \$14,400 in its first year.	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 66%-34%
19	MI	Caro	Type: Property tax	Voters in Almer Charter and Indianfields townships and the City of Caro were asked for 1 mill for three years for the Caro Transit Authority to operate Thumbbody Express. The measure is expected to generate \$231,000 annually.	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 62%-38%
20	MI	Eaton County	Type: Property tax	Voters in Eaton County were asked to increase the millage for EATRAN to 0.5 mill to allow service expansion and some fixed-route service.	3-Aug-10	LOSS Failed 45%-55%
21	MI	Eaton County	Type: Property tax	A measure identical to the failed August 3 measure will be back on the ballot this November. The proposal would replace the 0.2469 mill levy with an 0.75 mill tax levy for five years, from 2012 through 2016. The county Board of Commissioners voted to put this measure back on the ballot two weeks after the disappointing August election.	2-Nov-10	LOSS Failed 40%-60%
52	WV	Glen Dale	Type: Property Tax	The Glen Dale City Council has voted to place a bus service tax levy on the May Primary ballot. The tax would go towards paying the city's share of funding for any deficit of capital or operating costs, which is estimated at \$90,796 per year. Glen Dale is serviced by the Ohio Valley Regional Transportation Authority.	11-May-10	LOSS Failed 49.8%-50.2%
TOTAL APPROVED					2	
TOTAL NOT APPROVED					4	
APPROVAL RATE					33%	

PROPERTY TAX RENEWALS & RESTORATIONS						
15	MI	Bay County	Type: Property tax	Bay County voters were asked to approve a five-year, 0.75-mil renewal for operations of the Bay Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The renewal is expected to generate about \$2.2 million a year. The rate has not increased since it was first approved by voters in 1981. The revenue is used to match state and federal grants, which all totaled fund Bay Metro's \$7 million annual budget.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 64%-36%
17	MI	Branch County	Type: Property tax	Voters were asked to approve a 0.35 millage renewal to support the operation of the Branch Area Transit Authority (BATA) bus service. Local voters have always approved renewals. The tax will continue until 2014, and is expected to raise about \$464,770 in its first year.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 70%-30%
18	MI	Clare County	Type: Property tax	Voters were asked to approve a five-year millage renewal for Clare County Transit Corporation. The total request was for 0.3 mills, with 0.2953 mills being renewed and 0.0047 mills being restored. The tax was originally approved in the 1980s. It is estimated to generate \$312,068.00 the first year. Clare County Transit has an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.2 million. Funding comes from the local millage, fares and state and federal grants.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 61%-39%
		Genesee		On the ballot was a five-year renewal measure for a 0.4 mill tax to support the Mass Transportation Authority's countywide bus system. In its first year, the tax is expected to generate about \$4.5 million. Countywide property taxes have been approved for MTA everytime they have been on the ballot		WIN Approved

22	MI	County	Type: Property tax	since 1996.	3-Aug-10	63%-37%
23	MI	Ingham County	Type: Property tax	The proposal would combine and reauthorize two levies approved by voters in 2004 and 2006 for public transportation services elderly and disabled. The 0.48 mill would raise approximately \$3.641 million a year.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 67%-33%
24	MI	Ingham County	Type: Property tax	This measure for the Capital Area Transportation Authority would replace two existing levies with a single renewal and an increase totalling 3 mills. This rate was approved by voters in 2004, but was subsequently reduced by a change in a constitutional provision. The millage is expected to generate approximately \$18,001,980 in its first year.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 63%-37%
25	MI	Lapeer County	Type: Property tax	This proposal asks voters to renew the 0.25 operating fund millage for the Greater Lapeer Transportation Authority. It was approved by voters in 2006 and was set to expire in 2010. It will be applicable in the townships of Deerfield, Elba, Lapeer, Mayfield, and Oregon and the City of Lapeer, for a period of five years, from 2011 to 2015. It is estimated to raise \$290,000 in its first year.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 67%-33%
26	MI	Ludington, Mason County	Type: Property tax	This proposal asked voters to renew the 1 mill operating fund millage for the Ludington Mass Transportation Authority that was approved in 2006 for four years. The tax would be extended for five years, from 2011-2015 in the city of Ludington. In its first year it is estimated to generate \$262,945.	3-Aug-10	WIN
27	MI	Scottsville, Mason County	Type: Property tax	This proposal asked voters to renew the 1 mill operating fund millage for the Ludington Mass Transportation Authority that was approved for 2 years in 2008. The millage would be levied for five years, from 2011-2015 in the city of Scottsville. In its first year it is expected to generate \$23,460.	3-Aug-10	WIN
28	MI	City of Saginaw	Type: Property tax	The measure asked voters to approve a 3-mill, five-year renewal of the levy for the Saginaw Transit Authority Regional Services. The measure is necessary to maintain operations in preparation for a potential countywide measure in 2015.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 65%-35%
29	MI	Shiawassee County	Type: Property tax		3-Aug-10	WIN
30	MI	Spring Lake	Type: Property tax	Voters will consider a two-year renewal of 0.9898 mills to pay for the village's participation in the Harbor Transit transportation system. The levy would be within the village's authorized operating tax, and would not involve a change in its millage rate. It is expected to generate \$84,786 annually.	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 80%-20%
31	MI	St. Joseph County	Type: Property tax	St. Joseph County voters in August will get a request to renew for four years a 0.33-mill property tax originally approved in 2007. The tax generates \$583,000, about 45 percent of the St. Joseph County Transportation Authority's \$1.3 million budget. It is set to expire next year.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 61%-37%
32	MI	Van Buren	Type: Property tax	Request to renew 0.2480 mill for public transportation services for seniors and disabled people for 5 years, from 2011-2015. The levy is expected to bring in \$734,431 in the first year.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 68%-32%
33	MI	Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties	Type: Property tax	Voters in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties voted on a two-year millage renewal to fund local SMART bus service in their communities. The 0.59-mill property tax funds bus service in the 23 suburban communities that have chosen to "opt in" to the system by voting on the tax. SMART gets about half its revenue from property taxes, and has recently trimmed \$11 million from its budget — \$7 million through cuts and \$4 million through a fare increase that took effect Dec. 1.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved Oakland- 78% Wayne- 74% Macomb-72%
34	MI	Wexford	Type: Property tax	This proposal asked voters countywide to consider a 0.6 mill levy to support operations for the Cadillac/ Wexford Transit Authority. The levy would be renewed for four years. The CWTA had \$2 million in total expenses in 2009. This operating millage is expected to generate \$591,285.	3-Aug-10	WIN Approved 61%-39%

35	MI	Ypsilanti	Type: Property tax	City of Ypsilanti voters were asked to approve a charter amendment to levy an additional 0.9789 mills specifically for public transit, restoring the original 20 mills that had been reduced. With the amendment in place, Ypsilanti would secure an additional \$281,429 in revenue in 2011 for bus transportation through the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority.	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 72%-28%
38	OH	Toledo	Type: Property tax	Voters will be asked to renew the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority's existing 1-mill levy for another 10 years. The property tax provides approximately \$7 million a year. This tax is one of two collected in Toledo, Ottawa Hills, Sylvania, Sylvania and Spencer townships, Waterville, Maumee, Perrysburg, and Rossford to support TARTA.	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 53%-47%
51	WV	Cabell County	Type: Property tax	A renewal of a county-wide levy for the Tri-State Transit Authority was placed on the May primary ballot. The TTA levy is a five-year levy that will begin July 1, 2012	11-May-10	WIN Approved 70%-30%
53	WV	Huntington	Type: Property tax	The Huntington City Council has unanimously voted to place a renewal of the Tri-State Transit Authority levy on the primary election ballots this May. The TTA levy is a five-year levy that will begin July 1, 2012 and is a renewal of the current levy. The approximate total amount of funds needed is \$1,473,069 and the amount to be generated for the five fiscal years will be \$7,365,345, according to the ordinance.	11-May-10	WIN Approved 62%-38%
54	WV	Bethlehem	Type: Property tax	Voters will be considering renewals of property tax levies to support the Ohio Valley Regional Transportation Authority. West Virginia requires a supermajority to approve to pass levies.	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 74%-26%
55	WV	Moundsville	Type: Property tax	Voters will be considering renewals of property tax levies to support the Ohio Valley Regional Transportation Authority. West Virginia requires a supermajority to approve to pass levies.	2-Nov-10	LOSS Failed 57%-43% *needed 60% to pass
56	WV	Wheeling	Type: Property tax	Voters will be considering renewals of property tax levies to support the Ohio Valley Regional Transportation Authority. West Virginia requires a supermajority to approve to pass levies.	2-Nov-10	WIN Approved 76%-24%

TOTAL APPROVED **22**
TOTAL NOT APPROVED **1**
APPROVAL RATE **96%**



Fallon Research & Communications, Inc.

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FAX: 202-318-0346 MAIL: P.O. Box 12181, Columbus, Ohio 43212

November 9, 2010

TO: Interested Parties

FR: Paul Fallon

RE: Post-election Survey Data and Lessons for Transit and Public Funding Clients

Last week in Hillsborough County, Florida during the general election, a one percent sales tax increase request for public transit systems was defeated, with 42% of the voters supporting it and 58% opposing it. The extensive package of various transit and transportation components that would have been funded through the tax included road improvements, expanded bus services and a light rail system. It was one of the most widely-watched transit ballot issues in the country in 2010. Fallon Research & Communications, Inc. conducted a post-election survey among voters in Hillsborough County who turned out to vote. It provides some interesting, and surprising, insight that may be useful to transit agencies and organizations, as well as other groups that are exploring public funding requests which require voter approval, such as cities, counties, social service agencies and school systems.

Differences in Support

Although there were some profound differences in the levels of support between registered Republicans (25%), Democrats (63%), and unaffiliated or independent voters (34%), perhaps the most intriguing difference was predicated on expectations about the utility of the transit improvements. Interestingly, voters who are commuters working full-time outside the home were 5% less likely to support the tax than voters who are not employed working outside the home. In fact, only 6% of the commuters said that they expected to use the light rail system a lot for their commuting and travel needs. Of greater political significance, only 12% of voters that voted for the tax said that they would use the light rail system a lot. **This indicates that the vast majority of the voters that supported the tax did so, even though they had no intention of using light rail!**

However, that does not mean that self-interest was not a factor in their decisions, because 60% of those who voted for the tax said that they expected traffic flow and commuting would improve a lot because of the proposed transit improvements and light rail system. In addition to the partisan and behavioral differences, diametrically opposite expectations seem to be a critical factor in differentiating support and opposition for the tax. While 48% of voters who supported the tax said that the proposed projects funded by it would have strengthened and improved the local economy a lot, this sentiment was shared by only a paltry 5% of the voters that voted against it.

What Went Right

While it might be tempting to conclude from a 16 percent margin of defeat that there are few valuable lessons that could be gleaned from such a situation, the survey data indicates that there was some noteworthy organizational success that is instructive. A total of 26% of voters, including 47% of those who voted for the transit tax, said they were very or somewhat convinced by the information provided by the committee that championed the transit tax, named **Moving Hillsborough Forward**. This is an impressive achievement for an *ad hoc* organization that was competing with many well-funded candidate campaigns for the attention of voters. By comparison, just 6% of voters, including 7% of those who voted against the transit tax, said they were very or somewhat convinced by the information provided by the primary committee that opposed the transit tax, named **No Tax for Tracks**. In fact,

75% of those who voted against the tax reported that they did not recall hearing any information from it during the campaign. **This suggests that passive opposition was more detrimental than active organized opposition, and that little time and resources should be spent combating such groups.**

What Went Wrong

Even though “Monday morning quarterbacking” can be treacherous and retrospective views can be misleading, the fact that 28% of those who voted against the tax said they would have been more likely to vote for it if the amount had been a smaller one, which just paid for improved roads and expanded bus services, suggests that changing the plan -- or emphasis of the campaign messaging to certain targeted groups -- might have provided enough additional support to achieve victory. Although that could be seen as a repudiation of the light rail system concept, the bigger problem may have been damning 11th hour press coverage leading up to the election that raised questions about discrepancies in the total projected cost for the light rail system. A total of 28% voters, including a whopping 44% of those who voted against the transit tax, said their decision was influenced a lot by possible uncertainty about the total cost of the light rail system! Since a total of 43% of voters said they made their voting decisions within the last four weeks or right before they voted, **this points to the need to, whenever possible, have such questions resolved and, perhaps, vetted by responsible media organizations, well in advance of Election Day!** Once voters made their decisions, they seemed to become entrenched as only 13% of voters said they changed their minds about how they would vote. Although there are a lot of highly sophisticated cognitive psychological studies to explain this phenomenon, your mother probably said it best: “*first impressions are lasting ones.*”

Is It Over?

A total of 70% of those that voted for the tax would like for another issue to be placed on the ballot when more definitive information is available or the economy gets better, which is not surprising given their willingness to support the 2010 ballot issue under conditions that most dispassionate political observers would reasonably describe as less than optimal. The surprise is that, despite their initial opposition, those who voted against the issue still seem interested in transit improvements. When given a choice, a total of 21% would like for another issue to be placed on the ballot when more definitive information is available or the economy gets better, and another 20% would prefer seeking a lower tax so some vital improvements to existing services and roads can be made. In fact, only 31% of the voters that were against the tax say that no additional steps should be taken to improve roads and transit or build a light rail system. Despite the magnitude of the defeat, the issue is still a potentially viable one that may need to be refined and recast, because even opposition voters want something to be done!

Please feel free to call me at 614-341-7005, if you want to discuss this information in greater detail.

This information is based on survey research that was conducted through telephone interviews of 498 randomly-selected registered voters in Hillsborough County, Florida with valid residential and cellular telephone numbers who voted in the 2010 general election. The interviews were performed during the period of November 3, 2010 to November 4, 2010. The overall estimated margin of sampling error is +/- 4.39%, based on a confidence level of 95%, although it varies for each individual question. This means that if this survey was repeated, 95 times out of 100 the results would be within plus or minus 4.39% of those provided herein. In order to account for sampling variability within the confidence interval, adjustments were made to proportionately weight the results toward the actual electoral outcome, as well as demographic and electoral characteristics of the county.

About Paul Fallon...



Paul Fallon is a public opinion researcher, political pollster and advisor for levy committees, local government agencies, school districts, interest groups, political candidates and trade associations. He specializes in land-use policy research, education, transit and public funding ballot issues and referendums.

He has worked on issues and campaigns in 34 different states throughout the country. He has served as the pollster for numerous campaigns to get voter approval for public funding requests for transit services, school districts and government agencies of all sizes, ranging from Florida to California.

Survey of Voters Hillsborough County Transportation Referendum

**Conducted:
November 3-7, 2010**

Results & Summary

Survey Objectives

- Gather post-election data on voters' top-of-mind issues, and their outlook on the economy and transportation.
 - *Compare data to 2008 regional survey results—what has changed or stayed the same?*
- Find out voter perceptions on the Hillsborough County Transportation Referendum, and overlay the data with the regional plan's core principles and assumptions.
- Assess the messages and factors that influenced voter decisions in favor and against the 2010 Referendum.

Survey Methodology

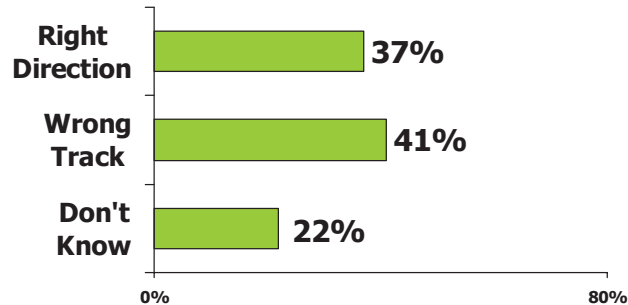
- A phone survey conducted November 3-7, 2010 of 400 Hillsborough County voters who told us they voted in the Countywide Transportation Referendum on November 2.
- To compile a statistically valid sample, we set quotas for gender, party affiliation, and population distribution (based on the 4 geographic districts of the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners).
- Average length of live phone interview: 13 minutes.
- Top-line results have $\pm 4.9\%$ margin of sampling error at a 95% confidence level. Margin of sampling error for subsets and demographic segments will be higher.

Context

Local issues
>Economy
>Traffic and congestion

Right direction/wrong track: 37% of respondents say things are going in the "right direction" locally.

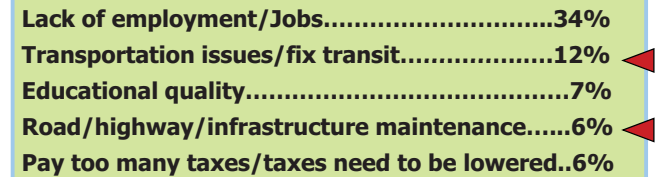
"How do you feel things are going in Hillsborough County these days? Would you say things are generally headed in the right direction, or do you believe things have gotten off on the wrong track?"



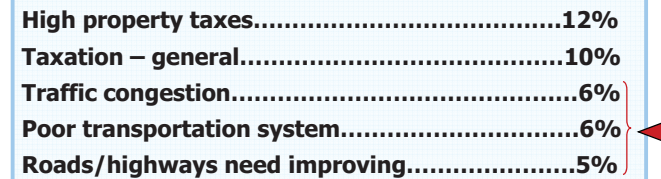
Transportation and traffic congestion are still top-of-mind issues for voters—though jobs and the economy have become more dominant issues in the past two years.

What is the number one issue facing Hillsborough County today that you would like your local officials to address? [OPEN END]

11/2010 survey

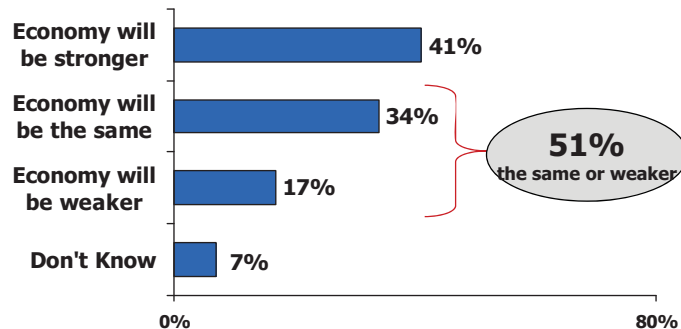


3/2008 survey



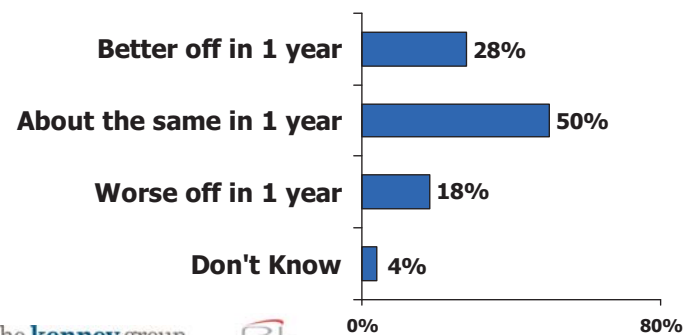
The outlook on the local economy is mixed: 51% of respondents think the economy will be the same or worse in the next year, but 41% think it will get better.

Thinking specifically about the local economy...do you believe the economy in the Greater Tampa Bay region will be stronger one year from now. . .about the same. . .or do you believe the economy will be weaker one year from now?



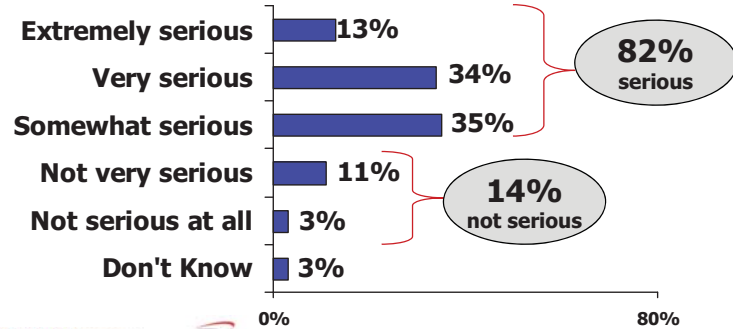
While the overall economic outlook is mixed, the personal household financial outlook is weaker. Fewer respondents expect their personal finances will get better in one year, and more think their finances will be "about the same."

What about your personal financial situation? Do you personally expect to be better off financially one year from now, about the same, or do you personally expect to be worse off financially one year from now?



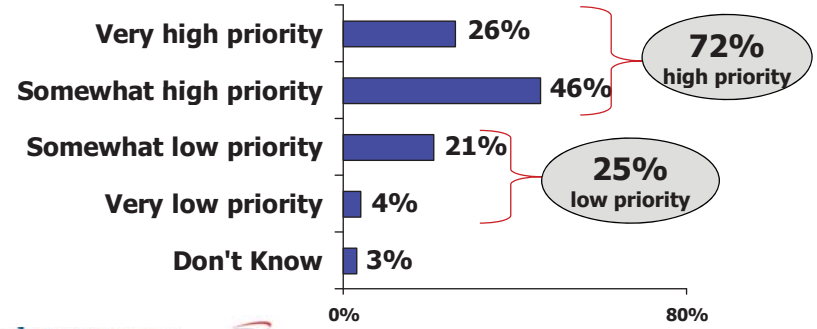
Traffic congestion is perceived as "serious" by more than 4 out of 5 respondents.

Thinking about traffic congestion, how serious of an issue do you believe traffic congestion is in the Greater Tampa Bay region?



72% of respondents consider traffic and transportation issues to be a high priority for local officials to address, among all the issues facing the region.

Given all the issues facing Hillsborough County, how much of a priority should dealing with traffic and transportation be for local officials?



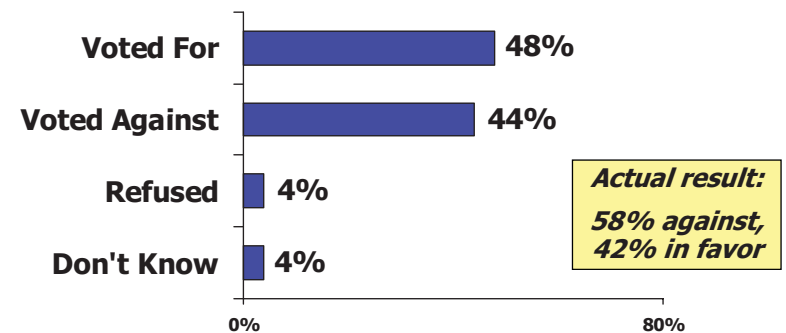
The Election

Election basics

"How did you vote?"
 "Why did you vote that way?"

Among our 400 respondents, 48% say they voted for the Referendum, and 44% say they voted against. The remainder would not disclose or simply did not recall.

In this election that just concluded, did you vote FOR or AGAINST the Countywide Transportation Referendum?



In an open-ended question, 31% of respondents who said they voted FOR the Referendum say they voted to improve the transportation system. Job creation, improving air quality/environment, and fixing roads were less dominant reasons.

Voted "FOR" [n=190]: In your own words, what is the primary reason why you voted for the referendum? [OPEN END]

Need a better transportation system	31%
Get traffic congestion under control	18%
To move forward/progressive	14%
Improvement to the city/beneficial to citizens	13%
Create jobs	12%
To fix roads/highways	4%
Better for the environment	3%

Among those who say they voted AGAINST the Referendum, there is a clear anti-tax sentiment that appears isolated from the content of the referendum itself. Nearly 3 out of 5 (58%) respond that they pay too many taxes, don't want to pay more, and government wastes tax dollars.

Voted "AGAINST" [n=177]: In your own words, what is the primary reason why you voted against the referendum? [OPEN END]

Taxpayer's burden/don't want to pay more taxes	41%
Wasteful spending/government needs to budget better	17%
Doesn't benefit the majority of the people	11%
It's not needed/transit is not necessary	11%
Need for better planning	7%
Bad economy right now, cannot afford	7%
Need more information/disagree with phrasing	3%

The Election

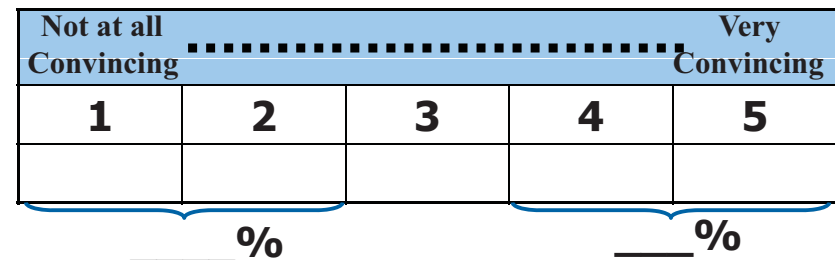
Messages

What was convincing, and what was not convincing?

Messages in Support and Against

We asked respondents to react to a series of messages about the Referendum—both in favor and against the proposal—and indicate how convincing they thought each one was as a reason to vote in favor or against.

In the interviews, the statements in the FOR and AGAINST series were randomly rotated.



MESSAGE (ranked by percentage of respondents who agree message is "convincing" reason to vote FOR the Referendum)	CONVINCING (4,5)	NOT CONVINCING (1,2)
Will create 25,000 jobs	54%	30%
Will make region more attractive to businesses	52%	29%
Connection to High Speed Rail to Orlando	50%	33%
Strengthen TB compared to competing regions	48%	31%
Strengthen transportation connections between communities in Hillsborough County	45%	34%
Relieve traffic congestion	45%	34%
Safer for bikes and pedestrians	44%	34%
Kickstart regional economy	44%	38%
Add 45 miles of light rail for commuters	44%	34%
Get cars off the road, improve air quality	41%	39%
Increase bus service throughout county	39%	37%
A secure trust fund & citizen watchdog group	38%	41%
Endorsed by local gov't, business and media	33%	44%

MESSAGE (ranked by percentage of respondents who agree message is "convincing" reason to vote AGAINST the Referendum)	CONVINCING (4,5)	NOT CONVINCING (1,2)
Economy is struggling, tax increase a bad idea	56%	28%
Harm economy, have highest sales tax in state	52%	32%
Light rail costs are too high for limited riders	52%	30%
Rail plan not finalized, too many missing details	50%	30%
Another bloated stimulus project, will just increase debt	48%	37%
Don't build rail just to be like other regions	40%	42%
Being pushed by planners, developers, special interests	40%	40%
Adding street capacity is more cost-effective	30%	46%
Just pushing a social-engineering agenda	30%	49%
Build more roads to address traffic, not rail	26%	47%
Trains/rail are outdated, don't work today	24%	59%

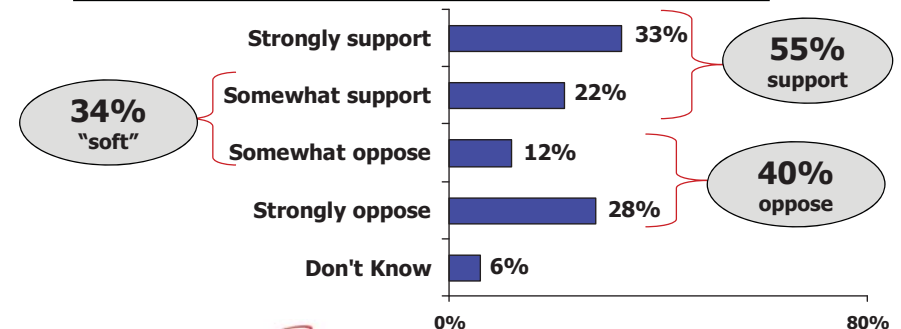
The 34% of respondents who cite unemployment and jobs as their top local issue of concern voted 44% "for," 50% "against" on the Referendum.

What is the number one issue facing Hillsborough County today that you would like your local officials to address? [OPEN END]

# 1 TOP OF MIND ISSUE	CITED BY	Q12 VOTED Y/ N
Lack of employment/Jobs	34%	44% / 50%
Transportation issues/fix transit	12%	75% / 19%
Road/highway/infrastructure maintenance	6%	39% / 52%
Pay too many taxes/taxes need to be lowered	6%	18% / 64%
Government spending/budgeting	4%	22% / 72%
Traffic congestion/pedestrian safety	3%	54% / 38%

55% of survey respondents indicated support for a "sales tax proposal like the Hillsborough County Transportation Referendum" if it covered the entire 7-county region— with high intensity both for and against.

Generally speaking, would you support or oppose a sales tax proposal like the Hillsborough County Transportation Referendum if the transportation improvements connected to the entire seven-county region?



Statement A

"We can't afford it – this is a bad time to raise taxes for anything."

Statement B

"The plan presented was just the wrong solution to address traffic congestion."

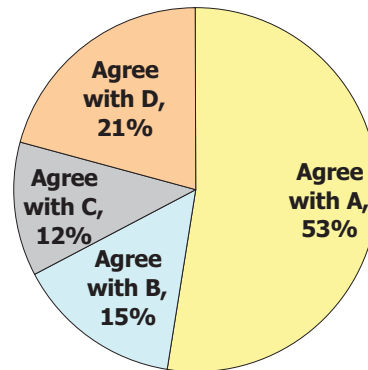
Statement C

"Transportation projects should not be done on a county-by-county basis, but with more of a regional approach."

Statement D

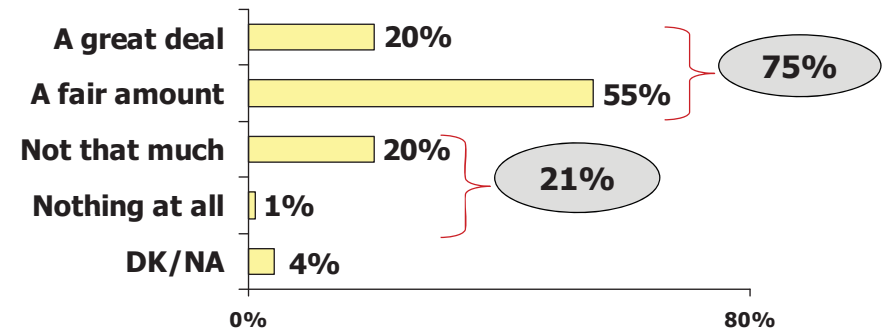
"County officials can't be trusted to spend the transportation tax money wisely."

Voted AGAINST respondents [n=177]: "I'm going to read four primary reasons cited for voting 'against,' please tell me which one comes closest to your own personal point of view for why you voted no."



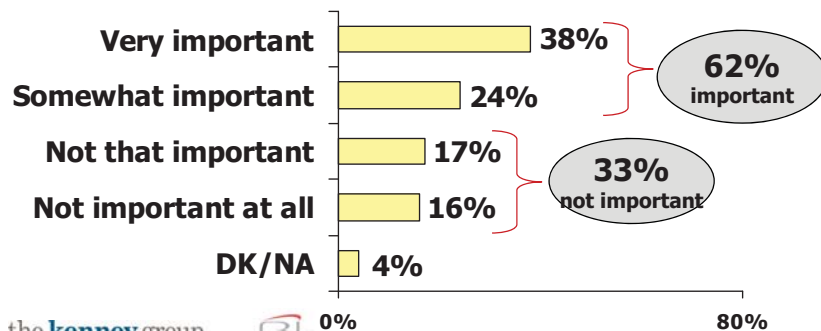
Three-of-four respondents say they have heard a "fair amount" or "a great deal" about the Florida High Speed Rail project.

How much have you heard, read or seen about "Florida High Speed Rail"?



After a brief description of HSR, 62% of respondents say it is important for Hillsborough County's transit network connect to HSR—38% say it is VERY important.

Work has begun on a high-speed rail connection between Tampa and Orlando, which will run 84 miles from downtown Tampa to the Orlando International Airport, with five stations along the way. How important is it to you that our local transit network connect to High Speed Rail—is it very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all?



SUMMARY

The central factor in the referendum outcome was the economy.

- Optimism in the economy and household finances is low. Jobs and unemployment are the dominant local issues of concern.
- 53% of NO respondents agree that the "We can't afford it – a bad time to raise taxes for anything" sentiment comes closest to their own opinion.

Voters see traffic congestion and transportation system improvements—including transit—as high priorities.

- 82% of respondents consider traffic and transportation issues to be a "serious" issue—and 72% say it is a priority that must be addressed.

Voters are pro-transit, but frugal on tax spending for transit.

- No traction for messages that dismiss rail mass transit and promote only more road capacity to address traffic.
- Majority of respondents say they would support a ballot proposal that includes the seven-county region, and 62% say tying Hillsborough County's transit system into Florida High Speed Rail connection to Orlando is important.

**Hillsborough County MPO 2035
Long Range Transportation Plan
November 2, 2010 Election Votes
Voters Approving Transportation Tax**



Hillsborough County MPO
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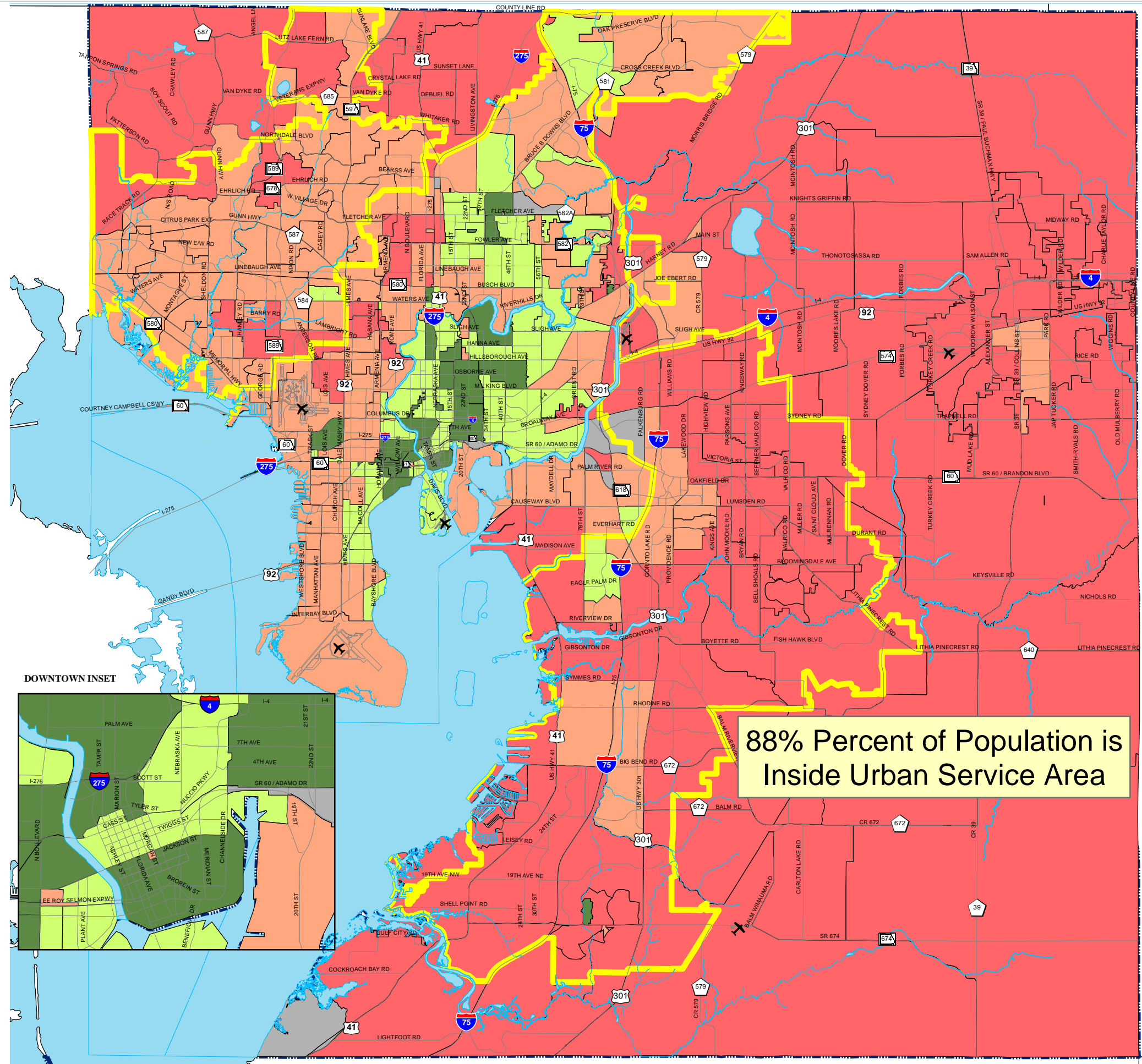
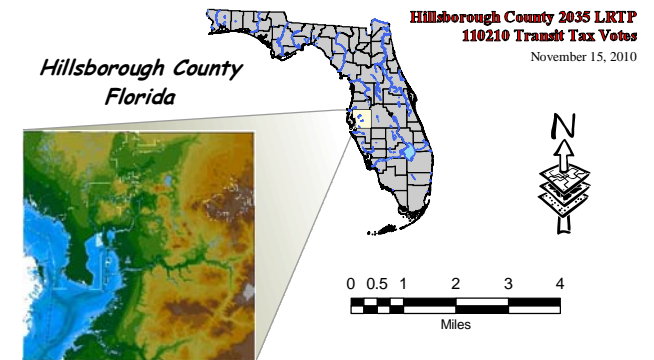
Legend

VOTERS APPROVING THE TRANSPORTATION TAX (PERCENTAGE OF BALLOTS CAST)

- 60 +
- 50% - 60%
- 40% - 50%
- < 40%
- 0

- Urban Service Area
- Tampa Service Area
- Hillsborough County
- Other Counties
- Water and Bay
- Streams/Rivers
- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Airports
- Airfields

Locator Map



88% Percent of Population is Inside Urban Service Area

DOWNTOWN INSET



DATA SOURCES: Basemap, roads, water from Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission. Parcel Lines and data from Hillsborough County Property Appraiser. Wetlands from SWFWMD, Significant Wildlife Habitat from Planning and Development Management, based on satellite imagery. Only wetlands greater than 40 acres depicted.

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Author: Roger W. Mathie - GIS Analyst

Hillsborough County MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan November 2, 2010 Election Votes on Transportation Tax



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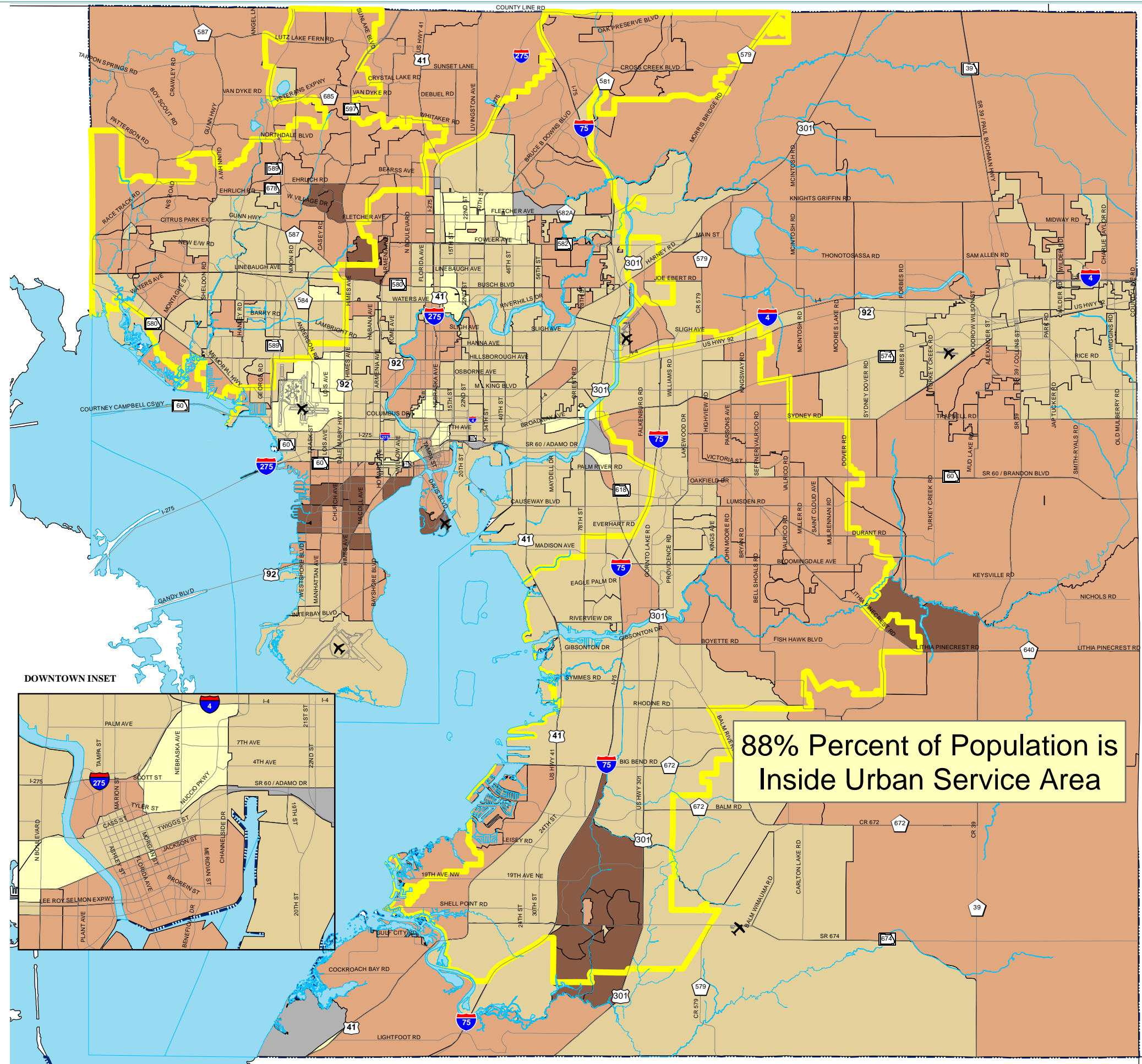
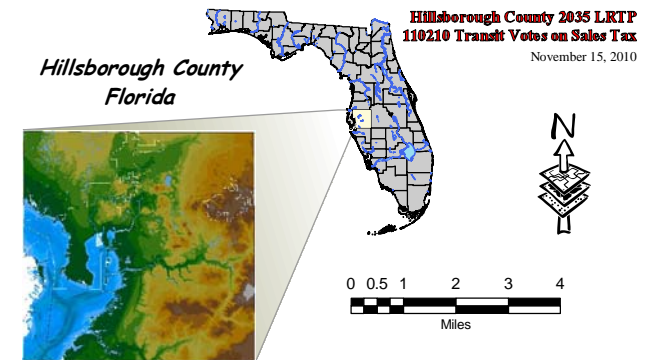
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**VOTER TURN OUT ON TRANSPORTATION TAX
ALONE (PERCENTAGE OF REGISTERED
VOTERS CASTING BALLOTS ON THIS
REFERENDUM QUESTION)**

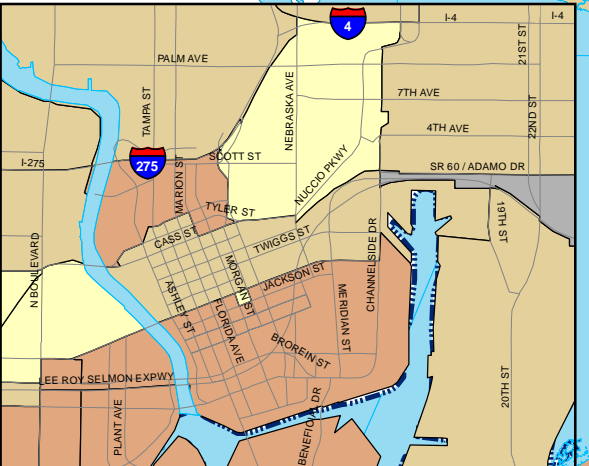
- 60 +
- 42% - 60%
- 25% - 42%
- < 25%
- 0

- Urban Service Area
- Tampa Service Area
- Hillsborough County
- Other Counties
- Water and Bay
- Streams/Rivers
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Author : Roger W. Mathis - GIS Analyst